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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, who has blessed us abundantly with inner joy and external blessings, enlighten our minds this day so that we can reach beyond guessing to knowing and beyond doubting to certainty. Purify our hearts so that the wrong desires may not only be kept under control but may be destroyed.

Strengthen the wills of our lawmakers so that they may pass beyond resolving to doing and beyond intention to action. Answer for them the questions no human wisdom can answer.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 14, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a

Senator from the State of New Hampshire, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. SHAHEEN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following any leader remarks, the Senate will be in morning business until 11 a.m. this morning. The majority will control the first half, the Republicans will control the final half. At 11 a.m., the Senate will be in executive session to consider the Cecchi and Salas nominations, with 1 hour of debate. At noon, there will be up to two votes on confirmation of the Cecchi and Salas nominations. Following the votes, the Senate will recess for the weekly caucus meetings until 2:15 p.m. At 2:15 p.m., there will be an additional roll-call vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the Coburn amendment No. 436 regarding ethanol. Finally, following the cloture vote, Senator RUBIO will be recognized to give his maiden speech to the Senate.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business consist of 1 full hour equally divided rather than ending at 11 a.m.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MEDICARE

Mr. REID. Madam President, on this side of the aisle, we Democrats want to protect seniors on Medicare. That is our top priority. I have heard my

friend, the ranking member of the Budget Committee, come here and talk for hours, and he keeps talking about things that really have no bearing on what I think is important for the country today.

We know the Republicans have put forward a budget that destroys Medicare. That is what we received. We voted on it over here, and it was turned down. It must be the Republicans' top priority because we have had votes on the Senate floor protecting taxpayer handouts, especially to oil companies. We had a full debate here that suggested we take this money that now goes to these oil companies—and even executives have said that they do not want the money, that they do not need the money—and apply it toward the deficit. Overwhelmingly, the Republicans voted no, so we couldn't get it done. So it appears clear they would rather balance the budget on the backs of seniors and Medicare than end the constant giveaways to oil and gas companies making billions a year in profits. These oil companies have made the largest profits in the history of the world. In the last quarter, they had \$36 billion in net profits.

The Republicans' plan to end Medicare as we know it would put insurance company bureaucrats between seniors and their doctors and raise seniors' drug costs, forcing them to pay \$6,400 more out-of-pocket costs every year. The American people are overwhelmingly opposed to this plan to end Medicare. A poll released yesterday showed that less than half the Republicans support the Republicans' plan to end Medicare. Overwhelmingly, Independents and Democrats joined with these Republicans who oppose the Republicans' plan to end Medicare.

We believe there is a need to reduce our deficit. That is why we have been working with Vice President BIDEN. Representing the Democrats in the Senate, Senator INOUE, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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